

Esmeralda Sierra. While Raúl sadly passed away in 2021, Silvette is employed as a Spanish Speaking Employment Counselor at the Erie County Department of Social Services, and Esmeralda is the current president of the Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York, Inc.

Following his service in the Army, in 1988, Mr. Sierra earned his Bachelor's Degree in Marketing from La Pontificia Universidad Católica de Puerto Rico as a part of the GI Bill. He then completed his Juris Doctor and began working in Ponce, Puerto Rico as an Administrative Judge for the Department of Consumer Affairs. Mr. Sierra also opened a private law practice in Puerto Rico, and worked there until moving to Buffalo. In Buffalo, Mr. Sierra worked for the New York State Division of Human Rights as a Human Rights Specialist until his retirement.

Luis Sierra was one of more than 80,000 Hispanic Americans to serve during the Vietnam War who, despite facing racial discrimination, bravely defended our country. We thank Mr. Sierra for his contributions to the war effort and his exemplary behavior while enlisted in the military.

Today, we join the Hispanic Heritage Council of Western New York to celebrate the achievements of Mr. Luis Sierra. Madam Speaker, we stand together today alongside Mr. Sierra, his family, and other Hispanic-American service members for whom we are eternally grateful.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

### HON. VICKY HARTZLER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 13, 2022*

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam Speaker, on Roll Call No. 302, I mistakenly voted yes when I intended to vote no.

#### TRIBUTE TO A GREAT AMERICAN

### HON. CHRIS STEWART

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 13, 2022*

Mr. STEWART. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a great American, Mr. Ed Mahen who died this past fall. Edward C. Mahen, Jr., was a dedicated civil servant, an Air Force combat veteran and an extraordinary engineer. Ed worked for the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) for more than 23 years. Prior to his work for the NRO, he honorably served for 27 years as an active duty officer for the United States Air Force, including as a veteran of the Vietnam War.

Ed was always excited about his work. He was fascinated by science his entire life, and he served as a trailblazer throughout his career. He was a leader, a driving force behind innovation, and a model of procurement excellence. Recognized for his contributions, he received a number of awards over his career, including that of Pioneer of National Reconnaissance. His work profoundly influenced the NRO's capabilities, and he has left an indelible mark across the Intelligence Community (IC).

Born in rural Missouri, Ed was raised by his mother and father who were born during the

Great Depression. His upbringing was greatly influenced by his parents' experience, as he was taught the importance of frugality, hard work, self-reliance and family loyalty.

Once Ed entered high school, he was exposed to his first experience with formal education. He grew up in the post-World War II period with its proliferation of science and technology, including rockets and nuclear weapons. While still living at home, Ed built a high-frequency radio telescope to listen to the radio emissions of the planet Jupiter as it would rise at night. In high school, he excelled in science and math. After graduation, Ed worked his way through the University of Missouri and graduated with a bachelor's degree in physics and a master's degree in electrical engineering.

In 1969, Ed Mahen was drafted for the Vietnam War and joined the United States Air Force. His formal education was over, but Ed was a firm believer in life-long learning. He stated, "Education is a continuum. It doesn't stop when you get a degree, and you have to continue to learn. So I never stopped going to school; I just stopped going to formal school . . . If I want to learn cryptography, I go off and study cryptography for a while. And I could figure it out. I could learn about it and apply it . . . So you just never stop learning."

From May 1972 to May 1973, Ed Mahen took an assignment on an AC-130 gunship in Vietnam. As was the case for many young Americans, this was a time of harrowing conflict and quick growth as he matured in a combat zone. In 1972 alone, the squadron lost one-fourth of its airplanes. Ed reflected, "It was the first time anybody really tried to kill me. We tried to die a lot of times." In that year, Ed earned two distinguished flying crosses and eleven air medals, and he flew 144 combat missions. At the end of his tour, Ed returned to the United States and served in various assignments in the Air Force, including overseeing all of the classified strategic and electronic warfare programs. He also served as a technical director for the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

In 1996, Ed Mahen went to work for the Secretary of Defense to help resolve the situation in the Balkans, serving as the Director of the Bosnian Command and Control Initiative. He helped establish a peace-keeping mission with no loss of life and kept the price tag within budget.

Upon his return to the United States, as a Colonel in July 1997, the logical next step was promotion to Brigadier General. However, this would entail an assignment away from his family across the country. His upbringing and lessons from his parents meant putting family first. So he retired from a highly successful career in the Air Force.

In 1998, as a civilian, Ed Mahen was recruited by the Director of the NRO to join the agency, where he served as the Chief Technology Officer for the Advanced Systems and Technology Directorate. In the years that followed, he was recognized repeatedly for his many contributions in the field of national reconnaissance. His work defeated current and emerging threats from terrorism and nuclear weapons proliferation—he became a standard of success at the NRO.

In 2009, Ed was nominated for the NRO Director's Award for Excellence in Acquisition. This time he was recognized for developing

capabilities that "have yielded actionable intelligence and made significant contributions to IC missions." Further, "his mission-focused, technically driven, and results-oriented leadership has and will continue to deliver revolutionary new capabilities to help counter the most critical threats to our Nation's security." As well as his technical accomplishments, he served as a role model and mentor for his team.

In January 2020, Ed Mahen was named a Pioneer of National Reconnaissance, the highest award offered by the NRO. The Director of the NRO, Dr. Chris Scolese noted, "Mr. Mahen's work enabled intelligence analysts to understand adversary capabilities and intent and helped our warfighters locate and track adversaries."

Ed Mahen was a remarkable leader, applying the lessons learned over a lifetime of experience and focusing that knowledge on practical, technical problem solving for national security challenges. He developed a unique ability to hire junior people and groom them into subject matter experts. He explained, "The key to program management, the first thing you do is put yourself out of business. So the first thing you do is hire the people who are going to replace you. So this program pretty much runs itself . . . it's sort of the biblical story of teaching people to fish. Teach people to be self-sufficient."

Ed was a storyteller, and he maintained a sense of humor. He illustrated his work at the NRO by telling the story of "Stone Soup," concluding, "A lot of these programs are finding the pieces to stitch together so that you can do things very quickly." Most importantly, he never lost his enthusiasm and wonder for the accomplishments of the NRO. He once reflected, "I think the NRO is a magic place. And I think with visionary leadership, the NRO could do anything."

After nearly 50 years of service to the country, and still an active innovator, Ed Mahen passed away on September 29, 2021. Madam Speaker, our Nation has been blessed and prospered with greater national security by the lifetime of service of Ed Mahen. May he rest in peace and may his wife and family be comforted knowing their husband and father was a true patriot—one who endlessly loved them and his country.

#### HONORING COLONEL RICK ZAMPELLI

### HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 13, 2022*

Mr. RYAN. Madam Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Colonel Rick Zampelli for his exemplary dedication to duty and service as the Division Chief of the Army House Liaison Division. Rick is transitioning from his current assignment to military retirement.

Colonel Zampelli was born in Akron, Ohio in 1972 and commissioned from the U.S. Military Academy as an Aviation Officer in 1994. Throughout his career, he has served in several command and staff assignments, including multiple operational deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Throughout his career, Rick has served in a variety of significant staff assignments to include Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Aviation and